

# Flagstaff Region 5 Year Plan Review and Update: Review and Responses to Trail Proposals



**BUREAU OF PARKS AND LANDS**  
**NOVEMBER 2013**

# Trail Proposals Summary

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- **Western Mountains Corporation (WMC)**
  - 47 mile Coburn Gore to Kingfield multiuse non-motorized trail
  - Segments would cross the Chain of Pond unit and the SW portion of the Bigelow Preserve near Stratton Brook
- **Maine Huts and Trails (MH&T)**
  - Stratton Brook Hut to 60's Road connector hike and ski trail
  - Allow bike use on Hemlock Trail or realign to allow bike use
- **Carrabassett Region NEMBA (CR NEMBA)**
  - Reroute of 60's haul road bike & ski trail in Dead River Twp. to allow continued bike access when in use as timber haul road
  - Allow bike use on 3 segments of management road/ snowmobile trail in southern Bigelow Preserve, potential reroute of 1 segment
  - Allow bike use on snowmobile trail across northern Bigelow Preserve and north arm of Ecological Reserve

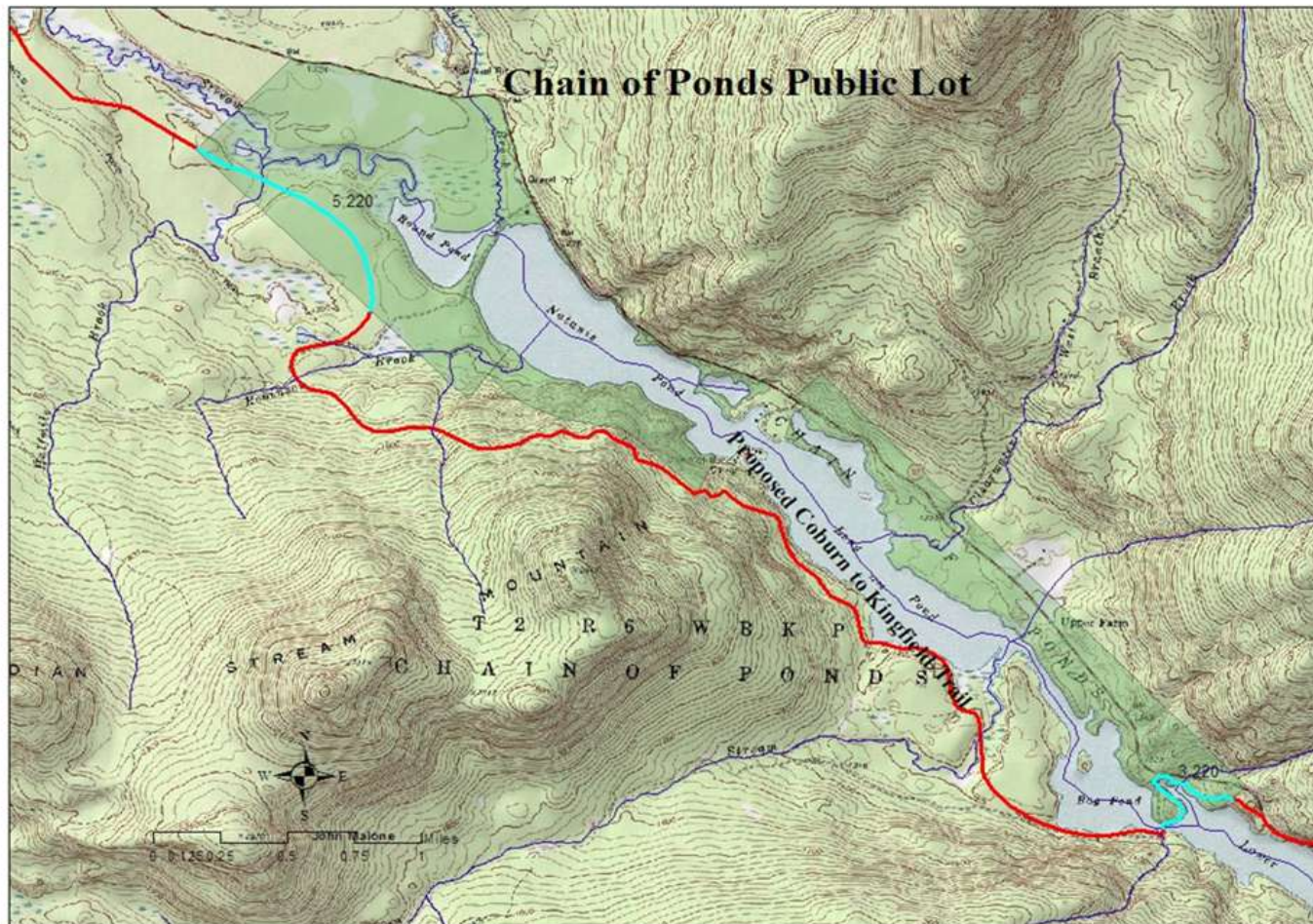
# Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail (WMC)

3

- **Proposal - Chain of Ponds area**
  - 1 mile and 0.6 mile segments of new trail at north and south ends of the unit, 2 new bridges
- **Concerns/Constraints:**
  - Trail routed on narrow strip of land, with steep exposed slopes between Lower Pond and Rt. 27, on both state and private land
  - Trail routed across IF&W dam at outlet of Lower Pond

# WMC Proposal – Chain of Ponds

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Source: Map provided by WMC.



# Field photos – Chain of Ponds

5



Proposed trail route – between  
Lower Pond wetland and Rt. 27  
(BPL property)



Proposed trail route – between Lower  
Pond shoreline and Rt. 27  
(south of unit)

# Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail (WMC)

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- **BPL Response**

- Routing at north end of unit is acceptable
- Routing at south end of unit, on private land south of unit, and at Lower Pond outlet dam does not appear feasible
  - ✦ Consider bridge across marshland at neck of cove
  - ✦ Road to proposed water crossing may become active logging road, with new truck bridge at crossing
  - ✦ State may acquire land on the west side of Lower Pond that could provide new options for trail routing
  - ✦ Potential amendment to Plan: work with WMC on concept for trail using potential new lands on west side of unit
- Need to develop long-term agreement for maintenance of trails

# Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail (WMC)

7

- **Proposal - Stratton Area**

- 7.5 mile segment, mostly within Bigelow Preserve
- ~4.5 miles of new trail along Stratton Brook
- ~3 miles on existing public access and management roads/trails (Stratton Brook Road and bike & ski trail/60s Road)

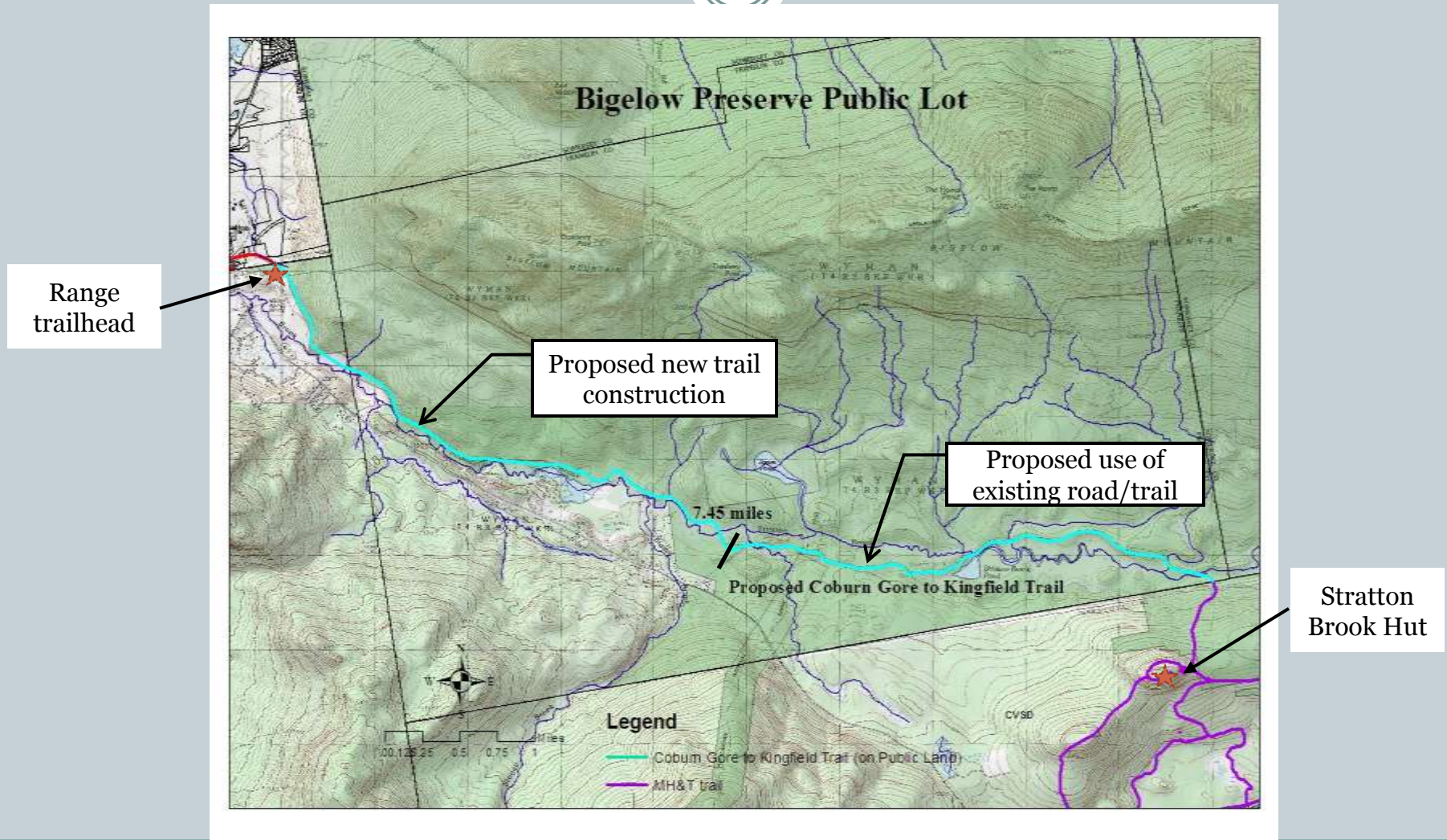
- **Concerns/Constraints**

- A new trail in Preserve, in vicinity of existing management road and snowmobile trail, raises concern of overdevelopment in area designated “Bigelow Backcountry” (p. 126 of Plan)
- BP Act does not allow motorized access/motorized vehicles to be used in construction or maintenance of new proposed trails in the Preserve.
- Proposed linkage with proposed MH&T Stratton Brook Hut trail, which would not be open to mountain bikes



# WMC Proposal – Stratton Area

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Source: base map provided by WMC; additional notation by BPL.



# Field Photos – Stratton Brook area

9



Snowmobile trail near Range TH:  
good surface conditions



Snowmobile trail ~1 mile from Range TH:  
washout with logs and poles  
across trail

# Coburn Gore to Kingfield Trail (WMC)

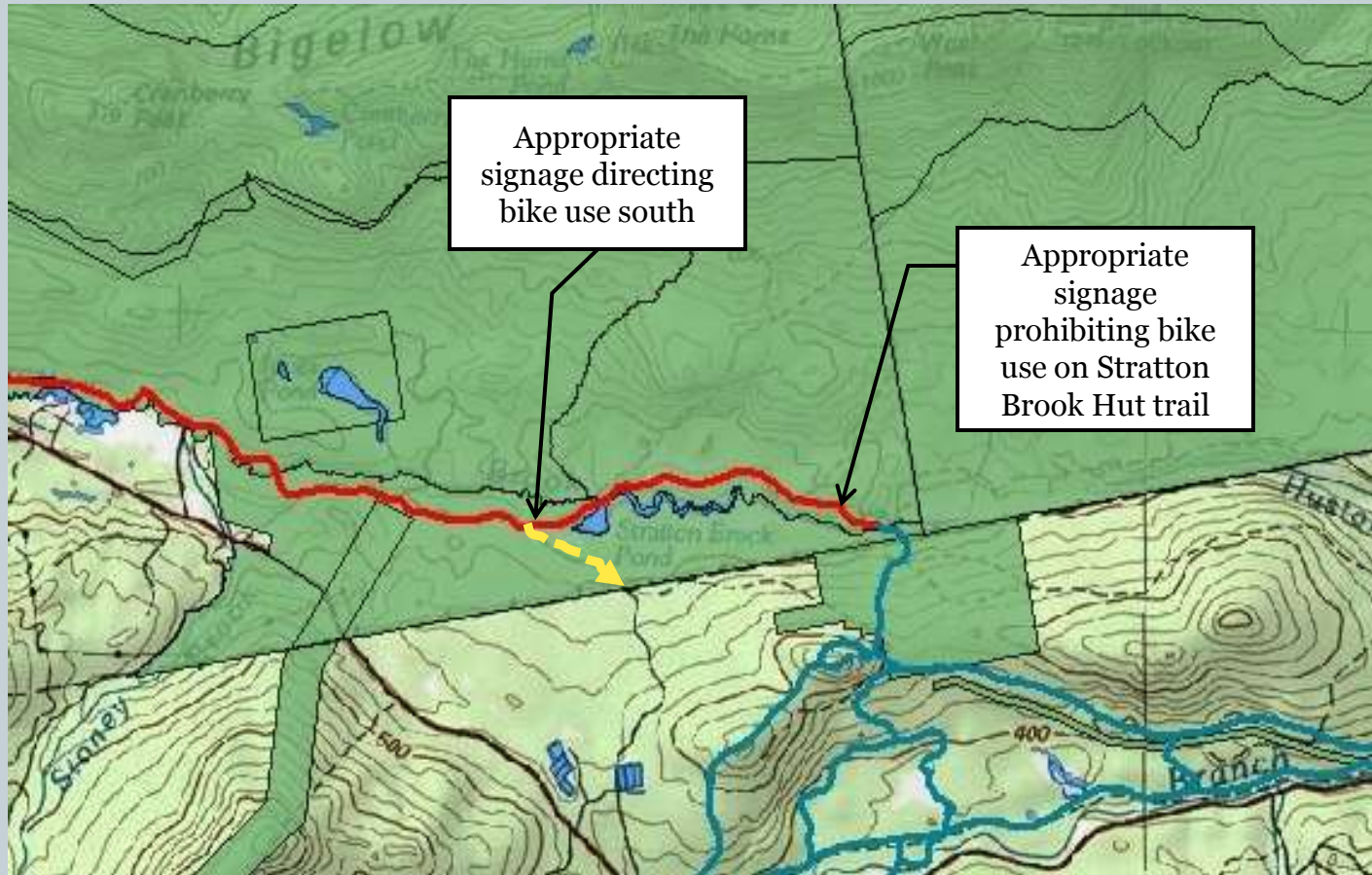
10

- **BPL Response**

- BPL could consider routing trail on existing management road (already open to mtn. bikes)
  - ✦ Would not be allowed to maintain with motorized equipment, per Bigelow Preserve Act
- Any trail improvements to facilitate bike and pedestrian use must be compatible with snowmobile use
- Trail concept has to be coordinated with other trail proposals to avoid incompatibilities
  - ✦ i.e., trail would need to be appropriately signed to divert bike riders wishing to stay on the WMC trail south at Stratton Pond parking area (on to “Dead Moose trail”), rather than continuing east onto the Stratton Brook trail/60’s road.

# Recommended routing of bike use on proposed Stratton Brook trail segment

11



Source: base map provided by WMC; additional notation by BPL.



# Stratton Brook Hut-Bigelow Preserve Connector Trail (MH&T)

12

- **Proposal**

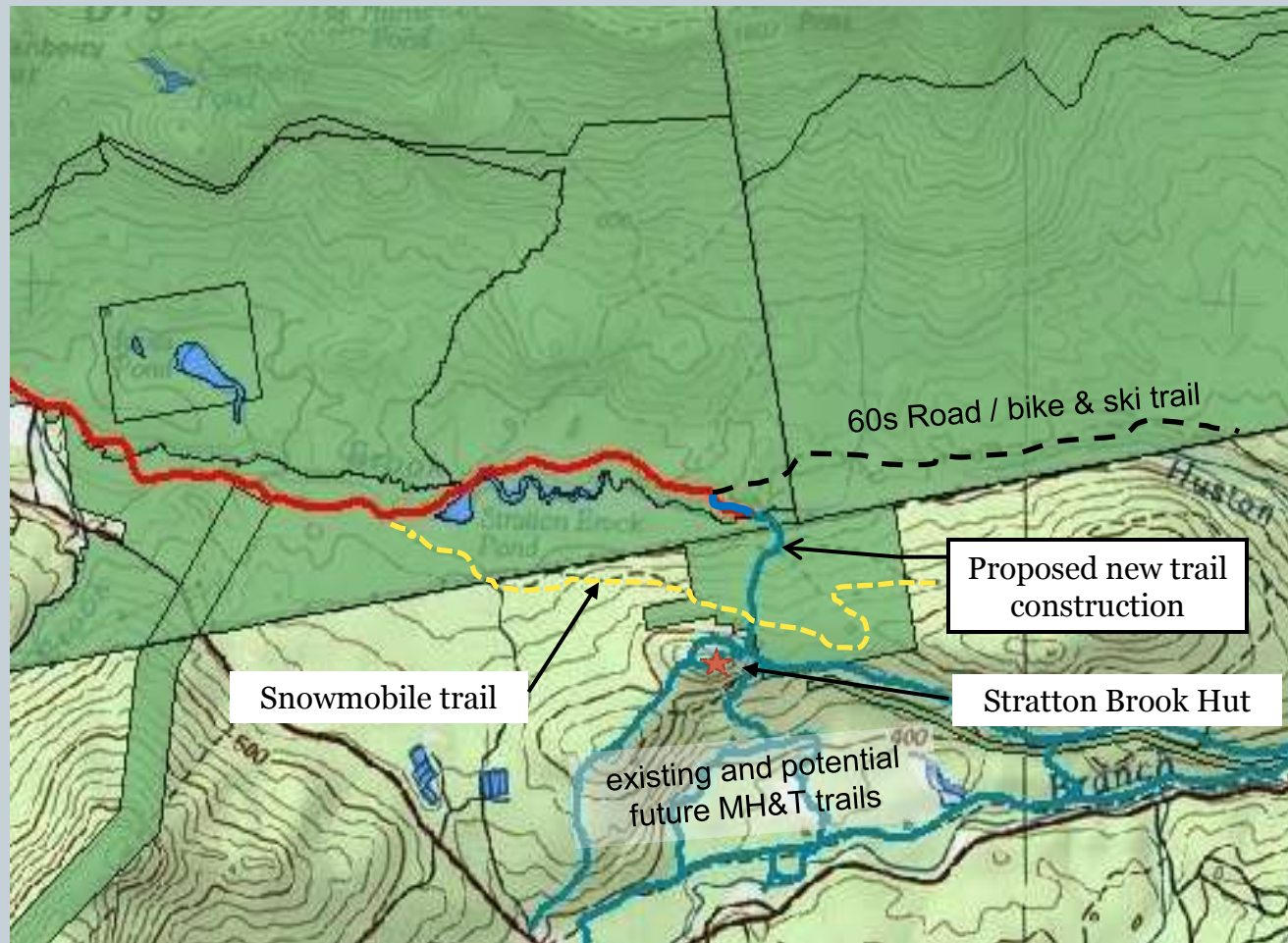
- New hiking/ungroomed skiing trail connecting existing multiuse trail near hut to the 60s haul road/Stratton Brook bike & ski trail, providing link to Firewarden's Trail
- Would cross Carrabassett Valley lot and sled trail before following an old road across the CMP powerline ROW and Stratton Brook
- Footbridge would be required for safe crossing of Stratton Brook

- **Concerns/Constraints**

- Bike riders on 60's Road may be tempted to turn on to new trail, although it would not be open to or designed for bike use
- Bigelow Preserve Act does not allow mechanical equipment to be used in construction of bridge in Bigelow Preserve (applies only to work conducted on north side of brook)

# Proposed Stratton Brook Hut Trail

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Source: base map provided by MH&T; notation added by BPL.

# Field Photos – MH&T trail proposed route

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Site of former road crossing of  
Stratton Brook (note beaver dam)



Old road south of Stratton Brook,  
with small stream flowing in road bed



# Stratton Brook Hut-Bigelow Preserve Connector Trail (MH&T)

15

- BPL Response

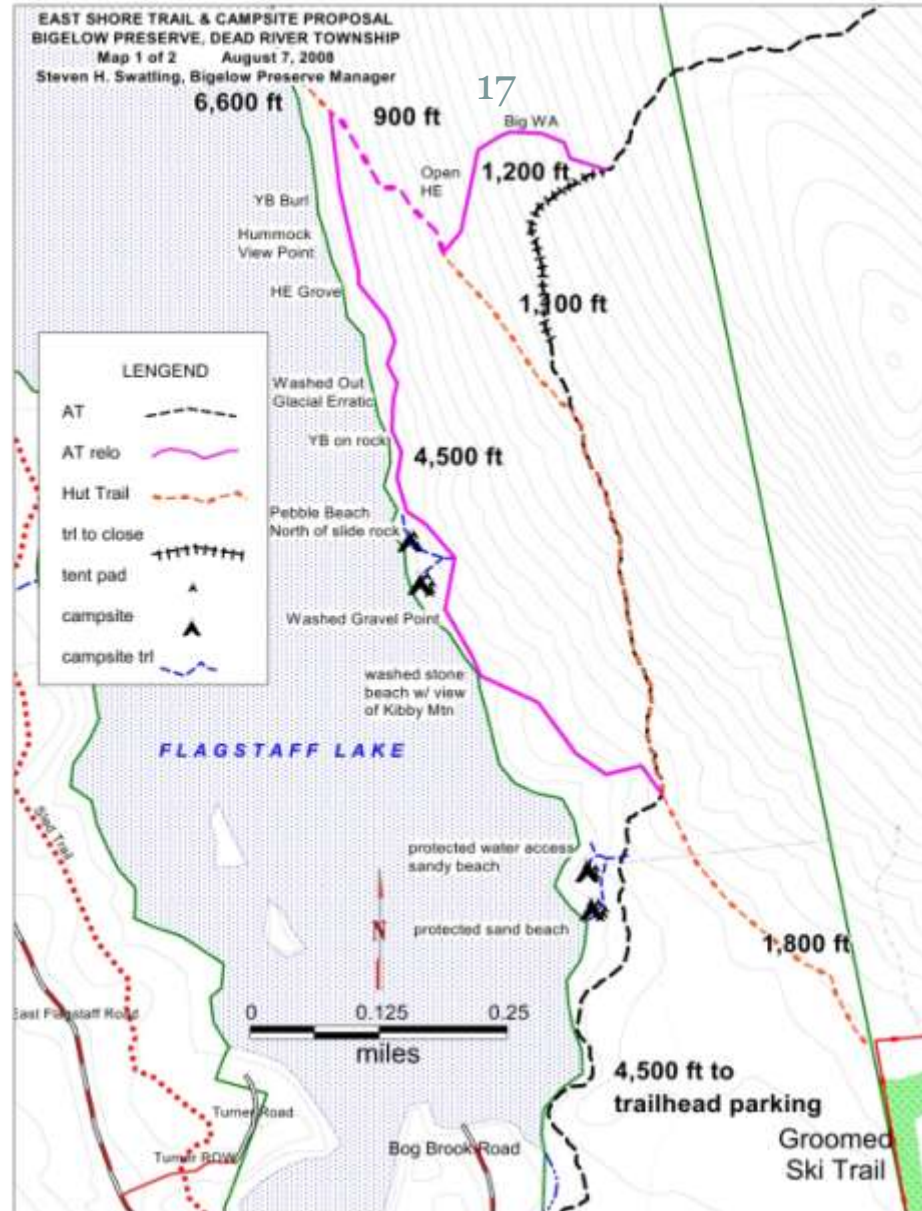
- Propose allowing development of new hike/ski trail, to be posted with appropriate signage as closed to bicycles, provided:
  - ✦ Final route to be determined by BPL in collaboration with MH&T (preliminary scouting of potential starting point and linkage with existing bike trail has occurred)
  - ✦ Design and construction methods for pedestrian bridge over Stratton Brook to be developed by MH&T and approved by BPL
  - ✦ A Visual Class I secondary allocation (buffer) would be designated, as stipulated by the IRP and the Plan (p. 149) for all hiking trails; goal is to “retain the appearance of an essentially undisturbed forest” (p. 132). *Note: several skid trails used in recent harvests now cross the proposed trail route.*

# East Side Flagstaff Lake trails (MH&T)

16

- **Proposal**
  - Request to allow bike use of Hemlock Trail or development of new parallel trail open to bike use, to allow trail riding between Poplar Stream Falls and Flagstaff Lake huts
- **Concerns/Constraints**
  - Current and a realigned Hemlock trail would cross AT
  - Hemlock trail is an undesignated AT side trail
    - ✦ NPS policy does not allow bikes on AT or AT side trails
    - ✦ BPL has agreement with NPS to manage AT and side trails on state lands consistent with NPS policy
  - Mountain bikes on the Hemlock Trail would be drawn to the recently realigned section of the AT along the lake shore
  - Resource allocation in the area crossed by Hemlock Trail is “Bigelow Backcountry non-mechanized” (no bike use allowed)
  - No approved trail for bikes to reach the Hemlock Trail from the south

# East Side Flagstaff Trails





# East Side Flagstaff Lake trails (MH&T)

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- **BPL Response**

- Recommend no change in allowed uses or realignment of Hemlock Trail for bike use due to
  - ✦ incompatibility with AT and BPL's MOU with NPS regarding AT management on state lands
  - ✦ incompatibility with current resource allocation
  - ✦ AT trespass and enforcement concerns
- If there is MH&T interest, consider bike use of existing groomed ski trail and new connection of ski trail to Long Falls Dam Road (south of Hemlock Trail) to reduce distance of road riding between huts

# “Dead Moose Trail” (CR NEMBA)

19

- **Proposal**

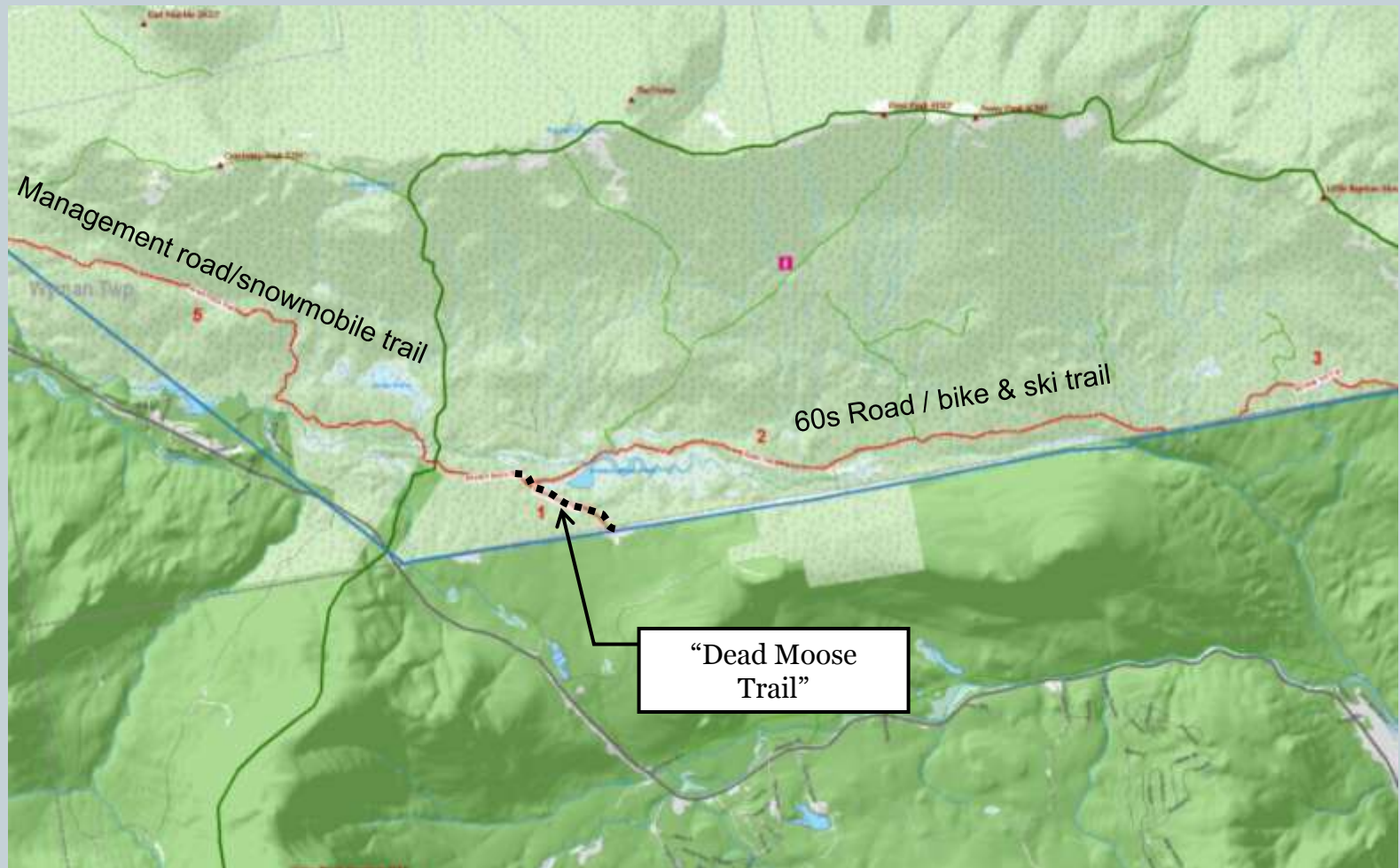
- Allow bike use on 0.7 mile management road/snowmobile trail between Stratton Brook parking area and Bigelow Preserve south boundary
- Purpose: “connect Esker Trail to town of CV creating loop option connector” [road connects to existing and planned trails on abutting CV Sanitary District land that lead to Stratton Brook Hut and Narrow Gauge Pathway]

- **Concerns/Constraints**

- Some work on problem areas (e.g., washed out culvert) may be needed before bike use could be authorized
- Proliferation of new designated recreation trails may conflict with timber management activities and increase concern about overdevelopment of the Preserve

# “Dead Moose Trail”

20



Source: base map with numbered trails provided by CR-NEMBA; notation added by BPL.



# Field Photos – “Dead Moose Trail”

21



North end of road/trail at parking area



Washed out culvert on road/trail.

# “Dead Moose Trail” (CR NEMBA)

22

- **BPL Response**

- Propose designating management road/snowmobile trail for bike use to provide connection to bike touring network on abutting lands
- BPL may use the road as a haul route during future timber harvests, and log yards could be constructed along the road
- Examine road for potential culvert\drainage repairs to facilitate bike use, schedule any needed repairs as resources allow

# “Esker Trail” (CR NEMBA)

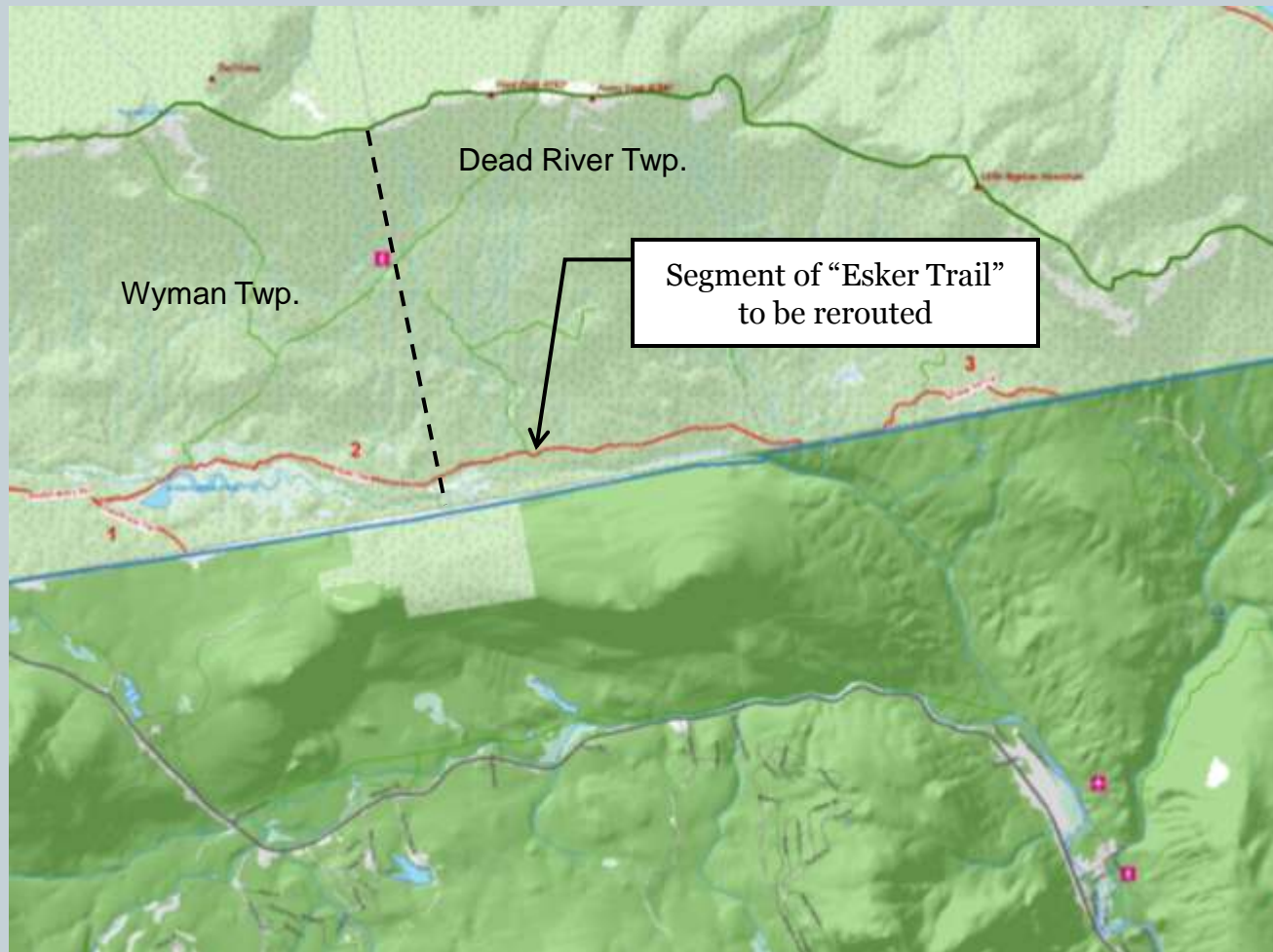
23

- **Proposal**
  - Reroute existing trail [~2.4 mile section of the 60's Road/ “Esker Trail” within Dead River Twp.] to mitigate for planned use of the road as a haul route during the next few years
  - Purpose: “Trail to provide wilderness experience for users”
- **Concerns/Constraints**
  - Availability of resources to construct rerouted trail ahead of planned harvests



# “Esker Trail” reroute request

24



Source: base map with numbered trails provided by CR-NEMBA; notation added by BPL.

# Field Photos – “Esker Trail”

25



“Esker Trail” in Dead River Twp.



Beaver flowage area on “Esker Trail” within Dead River Twp.

# “Esker Trail” (CR NEMBA)

26

- **BPL Response**

- Reroute ~2.4 mile section of the 60's Road/AKA “Esker Trail” within Dead River Twp.
- Collaborate with CR NEMBA on specific route and design of rerouted trail, with intention of providing an improved “single track” riding experience.
  - ✦ A potential trail to the south of the existing road was scouted by BPL several years ago during MH&T trail development discussions; this may serve as a useful starting point for reroute.
- If beaver flowage half mile east of township/county line is not avoided by reroute, consider means of improving crossing (trail has flooded occasionally)



# “Birthday Hill Trail” (CR NEMBA)

27

- **Proposal**

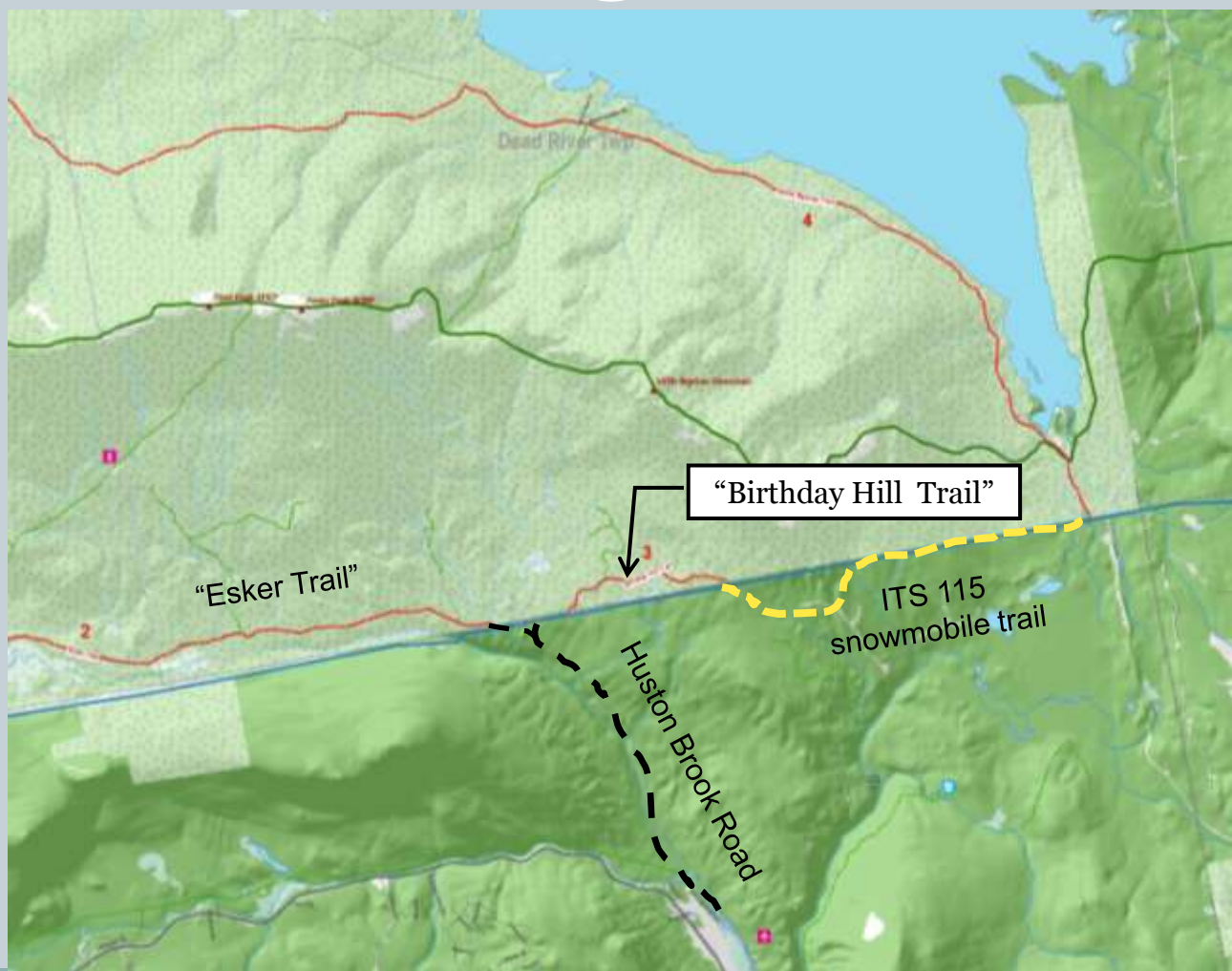
- Allow bike use on 1.5 mile management road/snowmobile trail segment along south Bigelow Preserve boundary
- Purpose: “connector trail in existing network, challenging climb/descent”

- **Concerns/Constraints**

- Does not link directly to any other bike trails
- Intent of the current Plan is to provide trail connections and touring opportunities on existing roads and as part of the regional mountain bike trail system
- Is it appropriate to develop challenging trails (rather than touring trails) with more intensive use on the Bigelow Preserve?

# “Birthday Hill Trail”

28



Source: base map with numbered trails provided by CR-NEMBA; notation added by BPL.

# Field Photos – “Birthday Hill Trail”

29



Slope on Birthday Hill Trail



Level section of Birthday Hill Trail



# “Birthday Hill Trail” (CR NEMBA)

30

- **BPL Response**

- Could allow mountain bike use of road/snowmobile trail segment as a connector trail
- Propose that this management road segment be designated for bike use when there is an indication of a continuous linkage to other bike trails in the Carrabassett Valley system.

# “Jones Pond Trail” (CR NEMBA)

31

- **Proposal**

- Allow bike use on 5 miles of management road/snowmobile trail crossing SW Bigelow Preserve (Range TH to Stratton Brook Pond Road)
- Reroute existing trail to provide better experience
- Purpose: “provide longer loop option for advanced rider [with approval of trail across northern Bigelow Preserve]/secondary out and back for intermediate rider”

- **Concerns/Constraints**

- Wet areas on westernmost mile of currently designated trail are not suitable for bike use (winter road section); rerouting this section should be explored
- Entirely rerouted trail to provide alternative to management road riding would entail 5 miles of new trail in Bigelow Preserve, raising concern about overdevelopment in “Bigelow Backcountry”

# “Jones Pond Trail”

32



Source: base map with numbered trails provided by CR-NEMBA; notation added by BPL.

# Field Photos – “Jones Pond Trail”

33



Snowmobile trail near Range TH:  
surface conditions suitable for bike  
use



Snowmobile trail ~1 mile from Range  
TH: washout with logs and poles  
across trail



# “Jones Pond Trail” (CR NEMBA)

34

- **BPL Response**

- Bike use of this management road/sled trail is authorized in the current Plan (see pages 126 and 163)
- Work with CR NEMBA to plan improvements on existing management road/snowmobile trail to facilitate bike use and improve riding experience, with reroutes in problem areas
- Improvements must be compatible with snowmobile use of the trail corridor, to be constructed by CR NEMBA

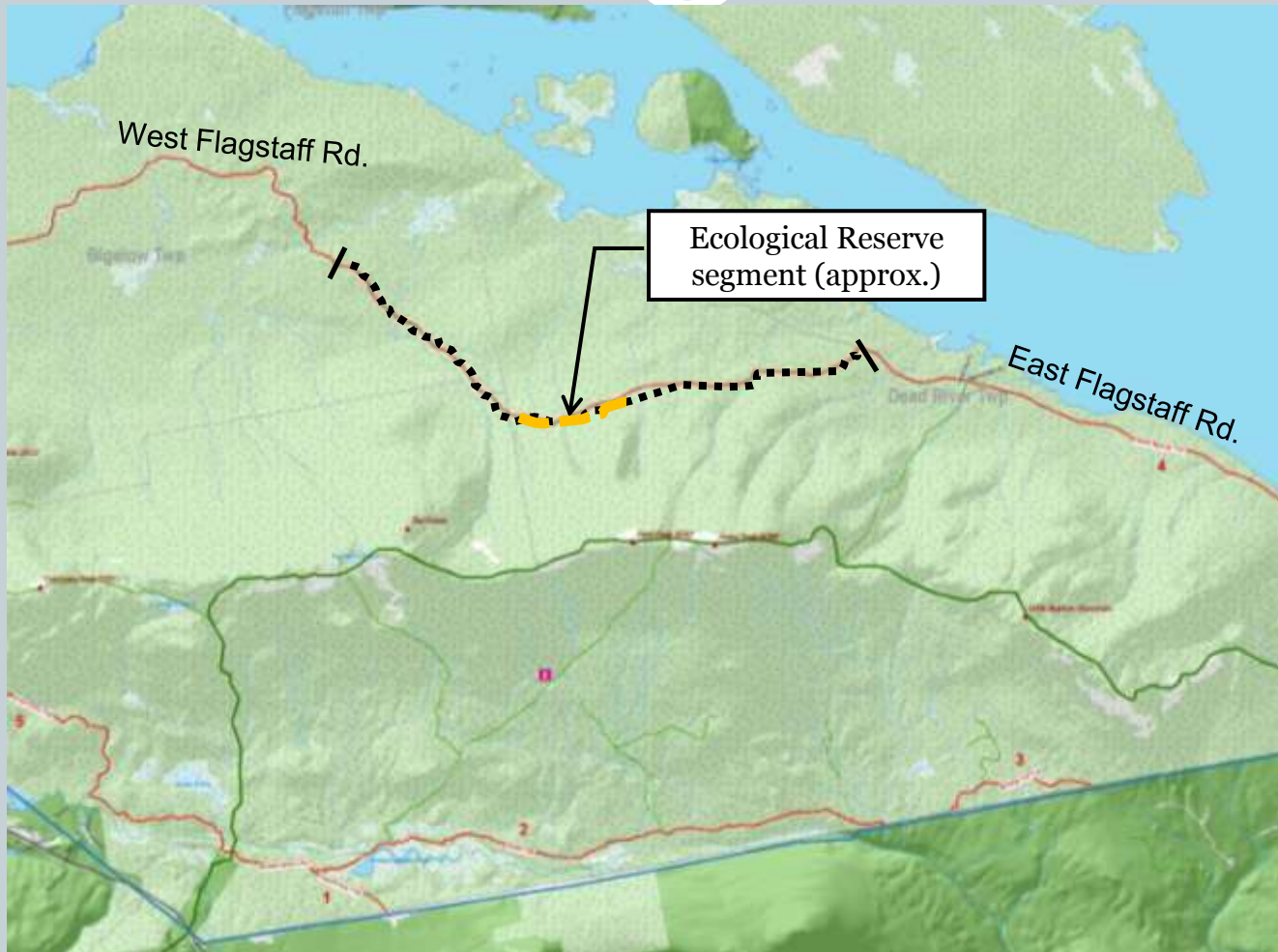
# “Backside Trail” (CR NEMBA)

35

- **Proposal**
  - Allow bike use on 5 mile management road/snowmobile trail segment crossing northern slopes of Bigelow Preserve, between East and West Flagstaff Roads
  - 0.5 miles of this segment crosses The Horns Ecological Reserve
  - Purpose: “provide longer loop option for advanced rider”
- **Concerns/Constraints**
  - Trail improvements and expansion of mountain bike use raises concern about overdevelopment of northern slope above East and West Flagstaff Roads, which is now more of a backcountry “undeveloped” area than the south slope (as far as summer recreation infrastructure)
  - Much of the existing snowmobile trail/management road surface is not suitable for bike use (wet areas, beaver flowage)
  - Winter road and highest elevation sections would be particularly challenging to improve for bike use
  - Any trail improvement work would need to be conducted without machinery, as required by the Bigelow Preserve Act

# “Backside Trail”

36



Source: base map with numbered trails provided by CR-NEMBA; notation added by BPL.

# Field Photos – “Backside Trail”

37



Wet area with drainage across trail  
(Bigelow Twp.) - conditions  
unsuitable for bike use



Beaver dam and flowage across  
trail (Bigelow Twp.)



# “Backside Trail” (CR NEMBA)

38

- **BPL Response**

- This proposal represents a more substantial potential change in policy and in the Plan’s objectives; therefore, further discussion with AC is needed regarding several key issues:
  - ✦ Precedent for bike use on other than a public use or management road
  - ✦ Current Plan’s objective to minimize further summer trail development on the northern slope and to locate mtn. bike trails “outside a core non-mechanized area” (p. 126), which includes the ecoreserve (Special Protection dominant use allocation)
  - ✦ Desire to limit additional recreation development in the Preserve, in keeping with Vision: “trails and facilities proposed in this Plan...approach the limits of...the maximum appropriate level” (p. 116)
  - ✦ Lack of suitable trail surface on much of the existing snowmobile trail and limited options for conducting trail work in the Preserve and ecoreserve, along with need to maintain safe passage for snowmobiles